

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Grace Episcopal Church

and/or common Eliot Unitarian Chapel

2. Location

street & number Taylor and Argonne

not for publication

city, town Kirkwood

vicinity of

congressional district #2 Hon. Robert A. Young

state Missouri

code 29

county St. Louis

code 189

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Eliot Unitarian Chapel

street & number Taylor and Argonne

city, town Kirkwood

vicinity of

state

Missouri 63122

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis County Courthouse

street & number 7900 Forsyth

city, town Clayton

state Missouri 63105

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1963

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society

city, town Columbia

state Missouri 65201

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Eliot Chapel is a small, English Gothic Revival church situated on a rise looking west over a new outdoor market and the Kirkwood Railroad Station (barely visible on the right in photo #1). Surrounded by streets, it is on the western edge of a residential area. The town of Kirkwood, founded as a stop along the Missouri Pacific Railroad in 1854, is a suburban community. The immediate area of the chapel has the central business district and frame residences built between 1850 and 1910.

Built in 1859 at a cost of \$12,000, the original building was a 29 ft. x 70 ft. rectangle of roughcut native limestone laid in a random pattern on a stone foundation (See photo #2 taken between 1860 and 1883). A square tower and steeple reaching 83 ft. at the southwest corner are original. They can be seen in photo #3. Robert S. Mitchell was the architect, his brother John Mitchell was the superintendent.¹ The stone transepts, a small one to the north and a full-scale one on the south, were added in 1883 and 1888 respectively, each at the cost of \$1,000. A one story flat roofed masonry addition to the south and attached at the tower was designed by Smith and Entzeroth of St. Louis in 1962 as part of a master plan that included renovation of the interior of the original church. That renovation took place in 1972.

The original church and transepts remain unchanged with the exception of new concrete steps at the entry, German and French handblown glass replacing the original stained and art glass windows and the removal of the cross atop the steeple. The stone, however, is starting to spall in several areas near the eaves.² Photo #4 shows that the main entrance protrudes slightly and the pitch of its fronton echoes that of the roof. The doorway has a stone drip molding and denticulated band. Detailing throughout is simple: Early English wall buttresses, arched windows and doors and a steeply pitched gray composition roof. The stone mason expressed his individuality by using a variety of crockets in a vegetal motif on the stone drip moldings. Louvered lancets accent the tower.

The 1883 transept protrudes from the easternmost of the five north bays. The apse (seen in photo #1), on the eastern end was constructed in 1972 during the interior renovation by Smith and Entzeroth, replacing a 1902 frame chancel and vestry rooms. Octagonal in shape, it has a rolled metal roof and glass doors opening onto an enclosed courtyard. The organ room of 1888 (south transept) is in scale with the original building and now provides the passageway to the most recent additions. (See photo #5)

The interior renovation shown in photo #6, completed in 1972 at a cost of \$100,000, maintained the original style of the church with white plaster walls and exposed wood ceiling but reconstructed a deteriorating balcony and added the platform and apse to the east.

The newest addition to the building was done by the St. Louis firm of Richard Claybour Associates at a cost of \$140,000. Constructed of textured concrete block, it can be seen in photos 1 and 5 that construction reflects the texture and complements the scale of the original building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1859; 1883; 1888 **Builder/Architect** Robert S. Mitchell/John Mitchell

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Eliot Unitarian Chapel is significant as one of the few intact examples of architecture by Robert S. Mitchell and a remembrance to the formative days of one of St. Louis' first "commuting" communities. As Grace Episcopal Church, it was an integral part of the social and religious life of Kirkwood's founders.

Though his career was cut short when he was lost at sea returning from Europe in 1863, Robert S. Mitchell had already designed two significant buildings in St. Louis. Trained in St. Louis with his uncle, Stuart Matthews, a local architect specializing in Catholic churches, Mitchell became project architect on the Old Courthouse from 1851-1855. Tearing down the original brick courthouse designed by Morton and Laveille, he assigned the building its basic shape of a cross with a high dome.¹ Subsequent architects expanded on this theme.² During this same period, Mitchell was responsible for the original Mercantile Library Building of St. Louis built in 1852-54 and razed in 1886. Housing the first library west of the Mississippi it boasted the largest (2,000 seats) auditorium in the city. As the cultural center of this young city, the building was the setting for the historic state convention of 1861 when Missouri voted against secession.

Harry Inness Bodley, the founder of Grace Church, moved his family to St. Louis from Frankfort, Kentucky in 1852 to establish an insurance agency. The summer home he built in the County (in what was soon to become Kirkwood) to escape the summer cholera and malaria epidemics of the port city, became his permanent residence after losing a daughter and grandchild in the summer of 1852.

Kirkwood was established as a stop along the expanding Missouri Pacific Railroad when H.W. Leffingwell and R.S. Elliot selected land belonging to Abram S. Mitchell, Bodley's son-in-law, and others. Named for the engineer on the line, the town was soon inhabited by St. Louis businessmen and their families, including Leffingwell and Elliot.

H.I. Bodley, being of distinguished English heritage and close to his Anglican faith,³ began lay reading in his house in 1854. Grace Church was organized as a parish in 1859. Bodley continued as a lay reader until the church was paid for in 1864. The membership rolls from those early years included the most important people in the community. Henry Hough, like Bodley, headed an insurance agency in the city and acted as postmaster of Kirkwood. Abram Mitchell was a director of the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company and then a partner in the St. Louis Daily News. Elliot and Leffingwell were civil engineers and opened one of the earliest real estate offices in St. Louis. They were responsible for laying out Grand Avenue and inspiring the Forest Park Movement in 1869. Leffingwell was Kirkwood's first administrator after its charter was granted in 1865. H. Clay Hart had a commission and forwarding business on the waterfront in 1850 and later owned a farm west of Kirkwood.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Bryan, John Albury. Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture. St. Louis: 1928.
2. "Journals of Ella Cecil Bodley." (1853-90) Kirkwood Public Library. (Typewritten)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. one-half acre

Quadrangle name "Kirkwood, Mo."

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	5	7	2	6	2	0	0	4	2	7	3	2	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Approximately 1/2 acre on the northwest corner of Block 25 in the town of Kirkwood in St. Louis County.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Donna Laidlaw

organization Eliot Unitarian Chapel date March 27, 1980

street & number 151 Helfenstein telephone 314/926-6826

city or town Webster Groves state Missouri 63119

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national X state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Director, Department of Natural Resources and
title State Historic Preservation Officer

Signed
date 22 Feb 82

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

2. 100 Historic Buildings in St. Louis County
1970 county
Historic Buildings Commission
St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation
Clayton Missouri 63105
3. Missouri State Historical Survey
1980 state
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City Missouri 65102

Item number 9

Page 1

3. Pierson, William H., Jr. American Buildings and Their Architects. Garden City,
New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1978.
4. "Plan of Action for Renovations and Additions to Eliot Chapel." Eliot Chapel,
1968 (Typewritten).
5. Scharf, J. Thomas. History of St. Louis City and County. Philadelphia: Louis
H. Everts and Co., 1883.
6. Seifert, Shirley and Adele. Grace Church Kirkwood, Missouri, Its Story. Kirkwood:
Messenger Printing and Publishing Co., 1959.
7. Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American
Architects (Deceased). New Age Publishing Co., 1956.

Item number 11

Page 1

2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey
and State Contact Person July 10, 1980
Department of Natural Resources 314/751-4096
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176 Missouri 65102
Jefferson City

**United States Department of the Interior
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ELIOT UNITARIAN CHURCH

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

1. The others who worked on the church were: Robert Getty, Contractor; Mr. Black, Carpenter; and Pat McCullough, Stonemason.

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ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

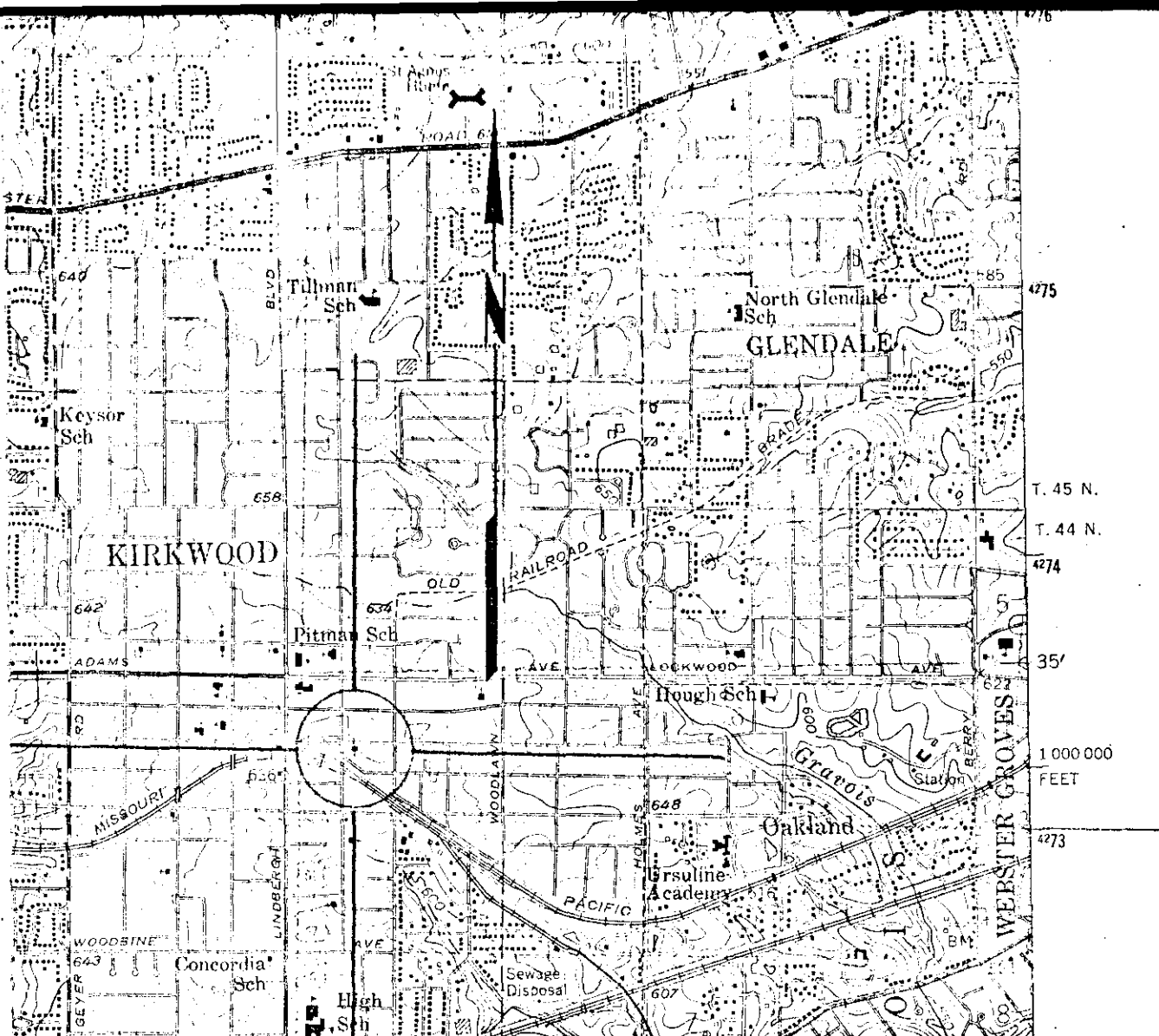
Page 1

The little church overlooked the center of Kirkwood life; the roundhouse on the railroad was between the church and the railroad station and a frame hotel on the north side of Taylor across from the train yard until it burned in 1867. As Kirkwood flourished in the post war years, Grace Church spread the Anglican church by sponsoring missions in St. James, Rolla and Eureka in the late 1860's. A high point was the 1868 convention of the Diocese of Missouri held at Grace Church where Grace was proclaimed its "most flourishing country parish."⁴

The building was sold to Eliot Unitarian Chapel in 1969. The Unitarian group is an outgrowth of the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis founded by William Greenleaf Eliot, founder of Washington University in St. Louis, and takes its name from that famous Unitarian.

FOOTNOTES

1. Catalogue of the Annual Exhibition of the St. Louis Architectural Club, (St. Louis, 1900), p. 8.
2. John Albury Bryan, Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture, (St. Louis, 1928), p. 14.
3. H.I. Bodley was a direct descendant of John Bodley whose son Sir Thomas Bodley built the Bodleian Library in 1602 at Oxford University.
4. Shirley and Adele Seifert, Grace Church, Kirkwood, Missouri; Its Story, (Kirkwood, Missouri, 1959), p. 28.

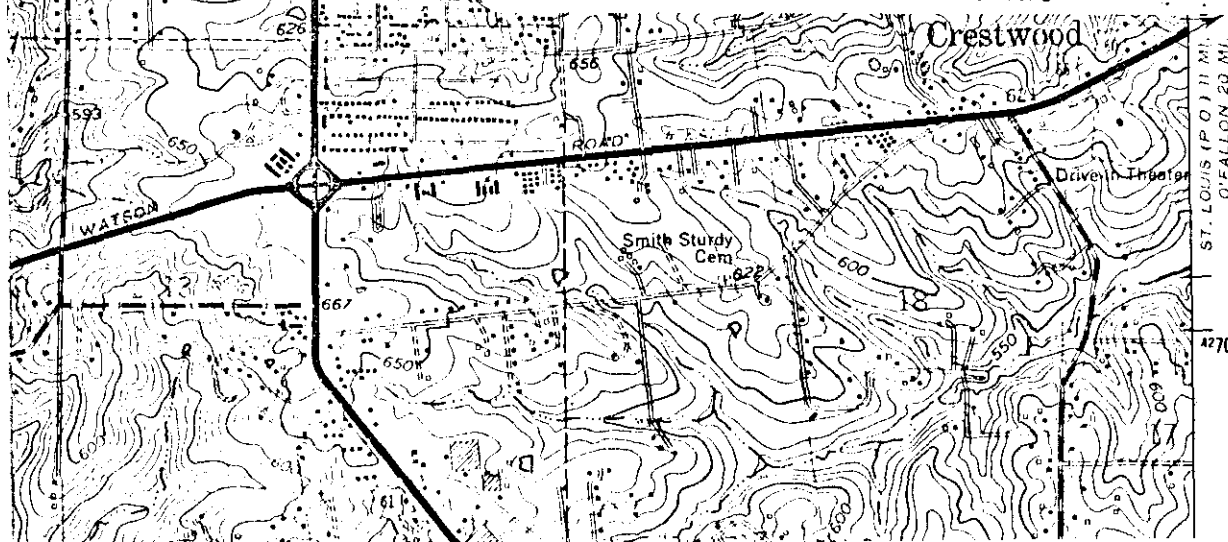


U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle
 "Kirkwood, Mo." (1954)
 Scale: 1:24,000
 Eliot Unitarian Chapel

UTM REFERENCE:
 15/726200/4273260

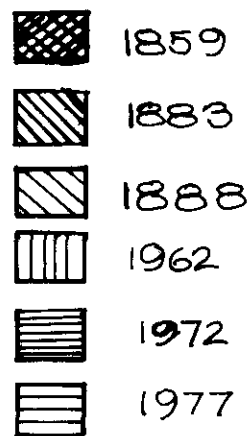


QUADRANGLE LOCATION



ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL

KEY



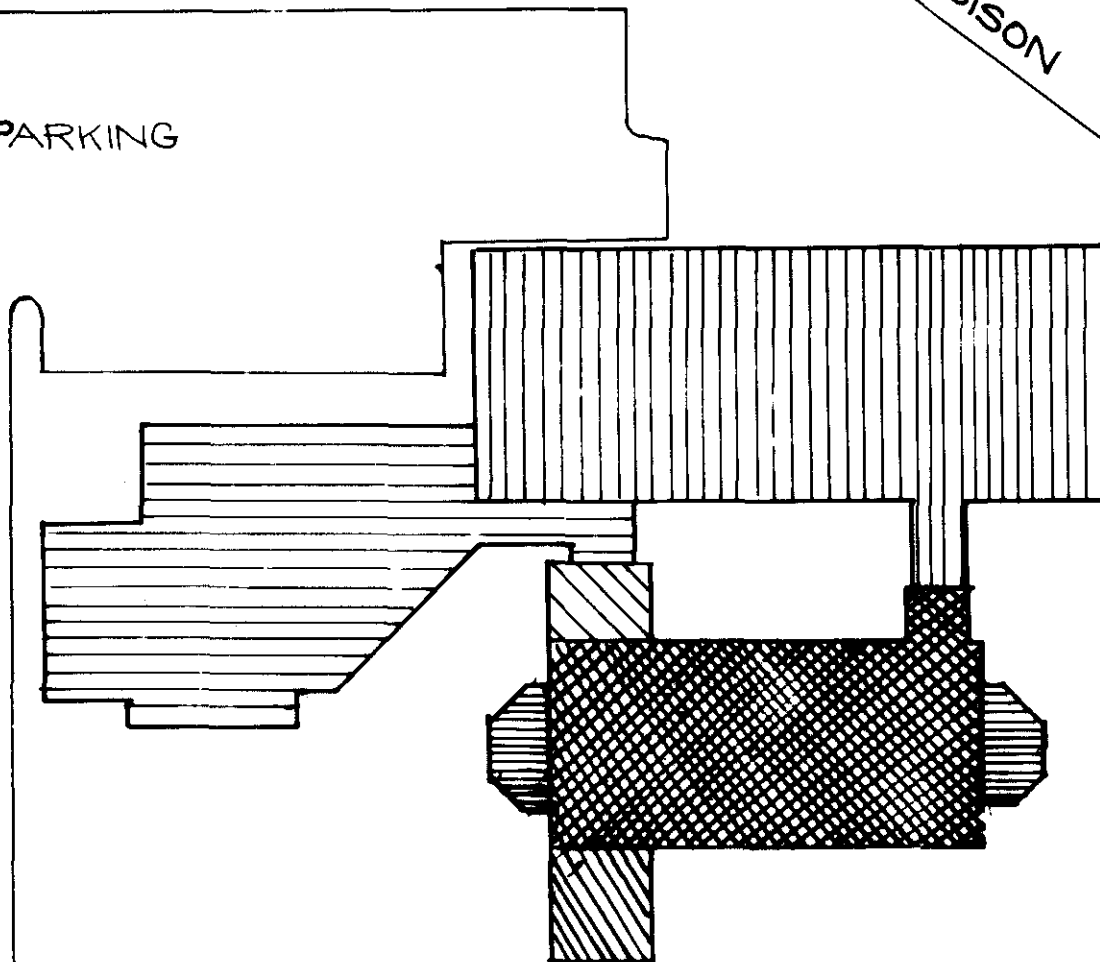
PREPARED BY
DONNA K. LAIDLAW

MADISON

TAYLOR

PARKING

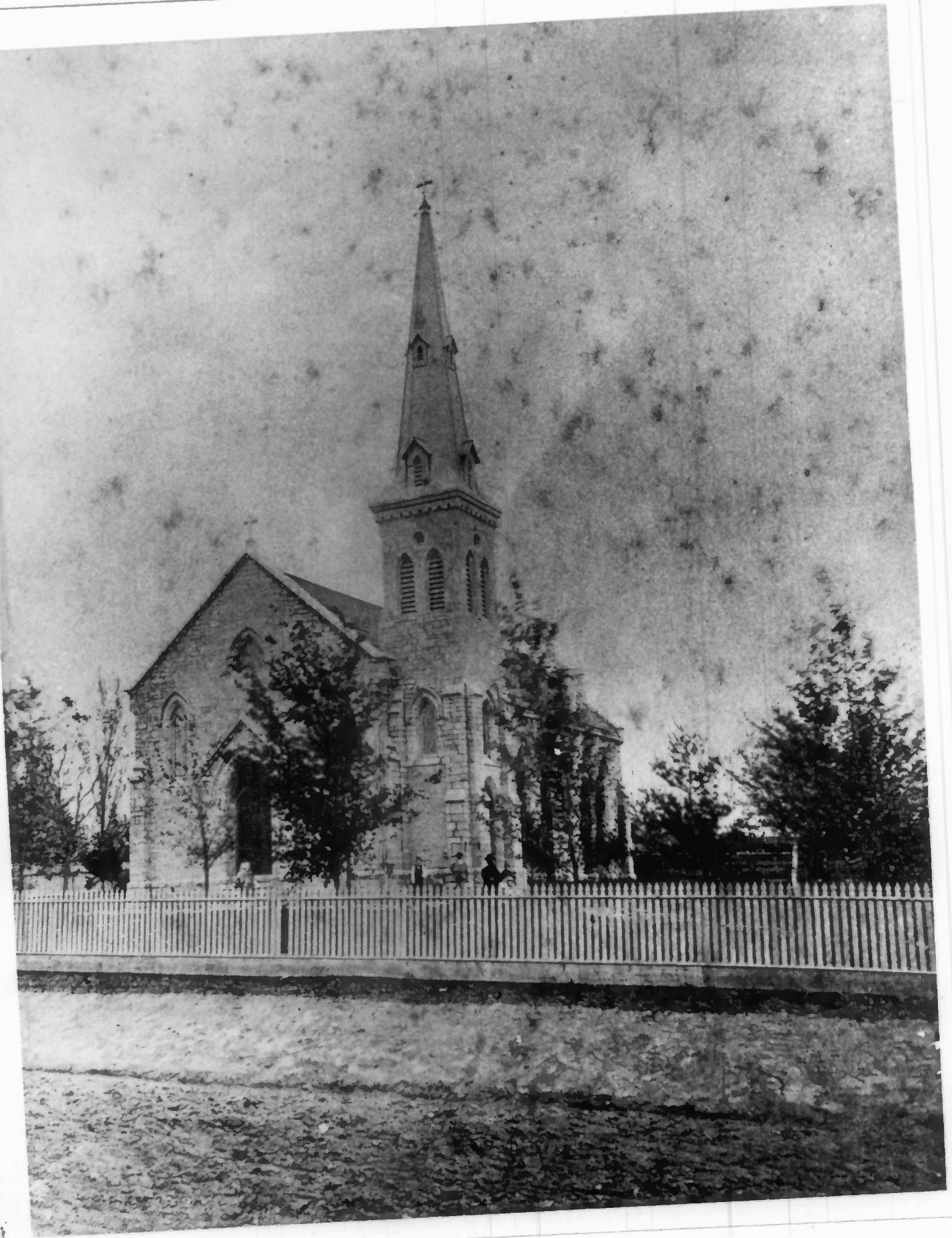
ARGONNE



ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL #1 of 6
Taylor and Argonne
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122
Photographer: Bill Engel
January 1980
815 Amolac, St. Louis, Mo. 63141
View toward west



ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL #2 of 6
Taylor and Argonne
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122
Photographer unknown
Copy negative at Eliot Unitarian Chapel
Taylor and Argonne
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122



ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL # 3 of 6

Taylor and Argonne

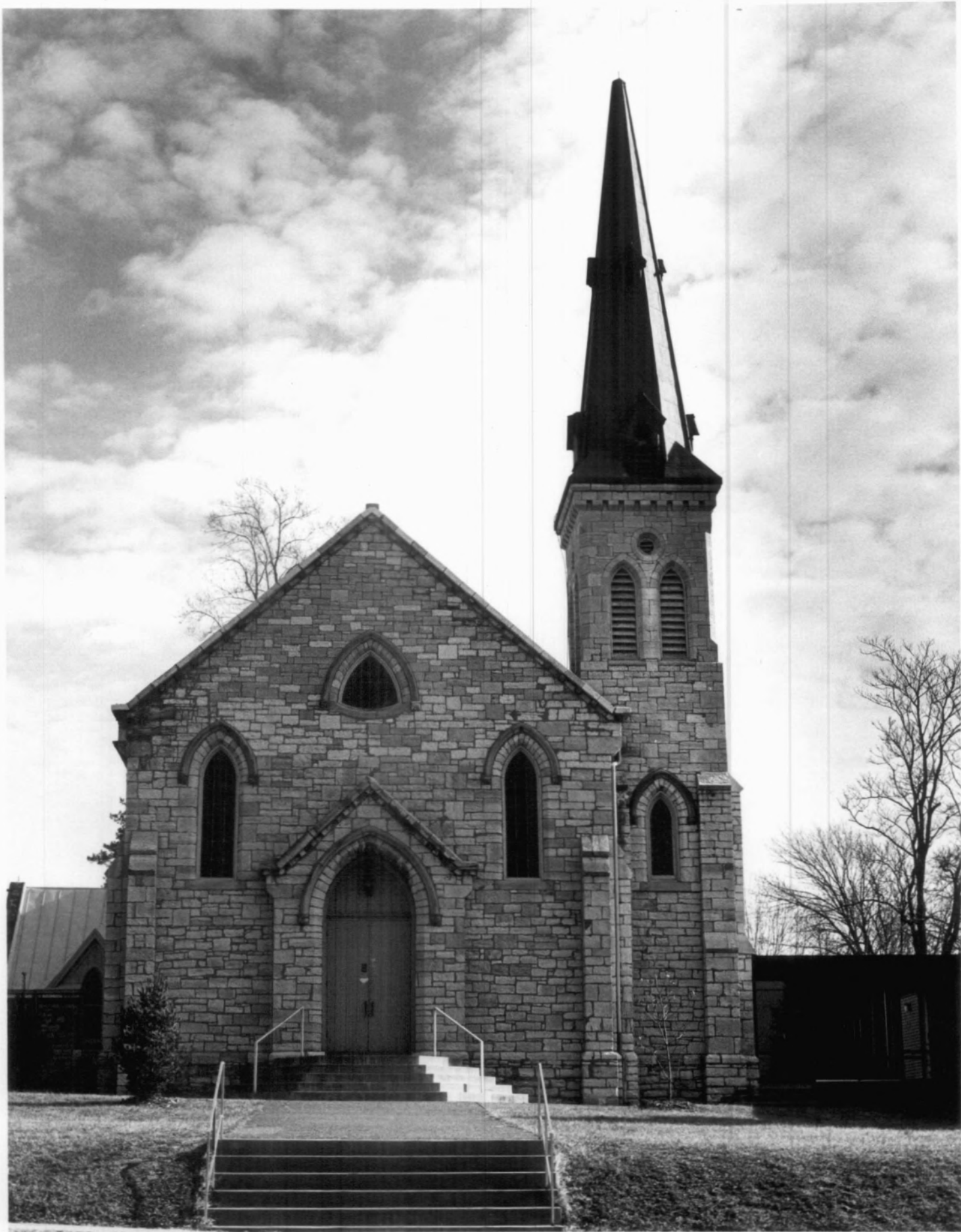
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122

Photographer: Bill Engel

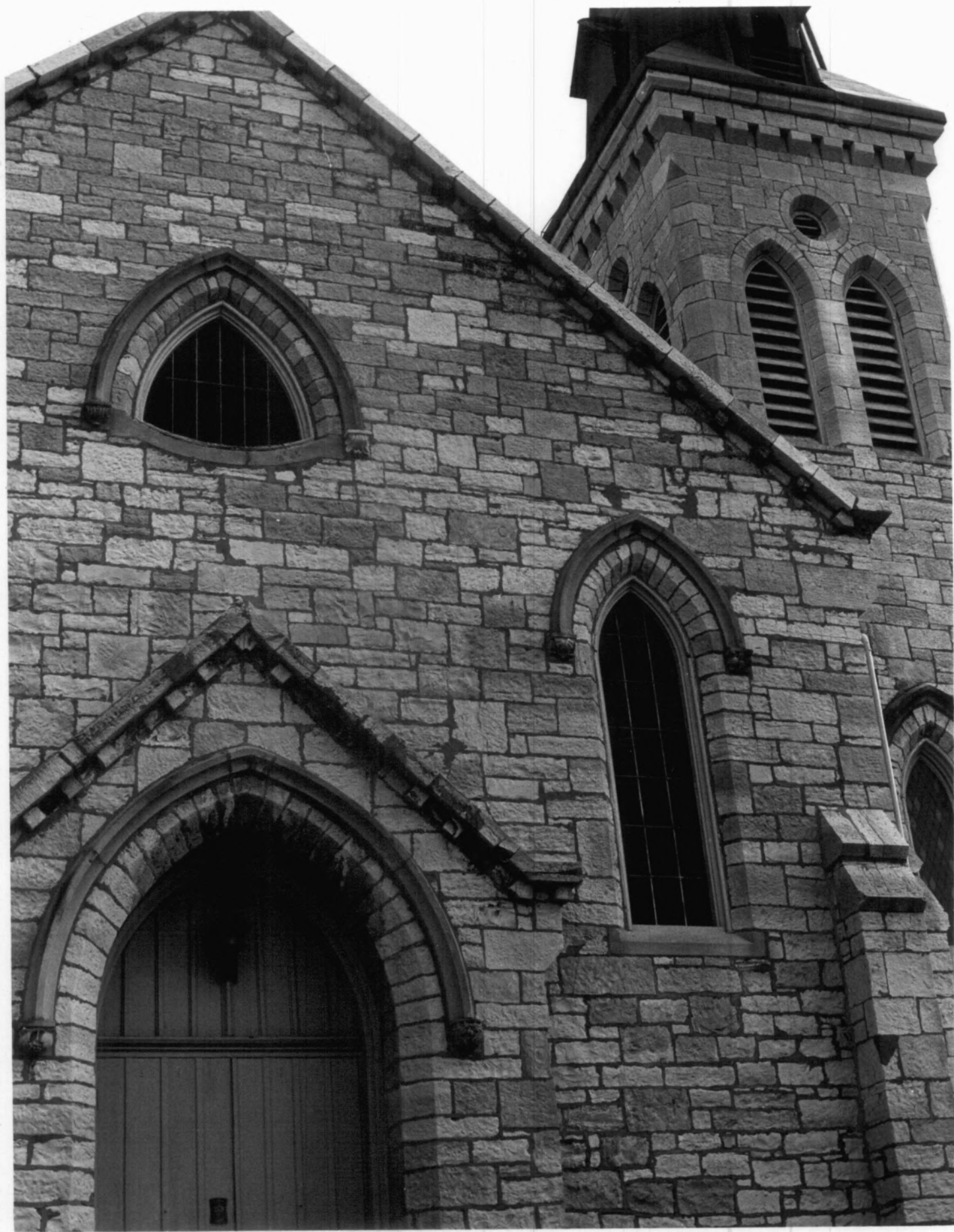
January 1980

815 Amolac, St. Louis, Mo. 63141

View toward east



ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL #4 Of 6
Taylor and Argonne
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122
Photographer: Bill Engel
January 1980
815 Amolac, St. Louis, Mo. 63141
Detail of western facade



ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL #5 of 6
Taylor and Argonne
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122
Photographer: Bill Engel
January 1980
815 Amolac, St. Louis, Mo. 63141
View toward north



ELIOT UNITARIAN CHAPEL #6 of 6

Taylor and Argonne

Kirkwood, Mo. 63122

Photographer: Bill Engel

January 1980

815 Amolac, St. Louis, Mo. 63141

Interior view toward the east

